PYGMY GOATS

AN INTRODUCTION TO PYGMY GOATS.

The Pygmy goat is a genetically small breed with distinctive conformation. Originally from Africa these goats first came to Britain many years ago and can now be found in the back gardens of modest cottages, in the grounds of fine stately homes, on smallholdings and farms. However it is in the pet's corner of some zoo where many first make the acquaintance of the Pygmy goat.

Overall numbers remain low but the Pygmy goat is not strictly rare. All goats are technically livestock but it is difficult to find owners of Pygmy goats who would class their animals as such. Some are ornamental, some provide owners with a limited supply of milk, but most are pets and this is a role in which the Pygmy goat excels.

Pygmies are small and easy to handle, clean and not at all difficult to care for, but it is the character of the animal which wins the hearts of owners. Gentle, responsive and very intelligent indeed, the Pygmy can be an enchanting companion, full of fun and surprises. Life with Pygmy goats can certainly not be described as dull.

Of course, pets are what their owners make them and Pygmy goats are not suitable for everyone. They require correct housing. a well-fenced play area and at least twice-daily attention. Their lifespan may be ten years or more and people who do not feel able to guarantee life-long homes are respectfully requested to choose some other hobby.

No animal will reach its full potential unless it is cared for properly. This booklet provides guidelines for people thinking of buying Pygmy goats. Disadvantages, as well as advantages, are covered in the hope that ALL Pygmy goats will find themselves in suitable, permanent homes ... ... and ALL Pygmy goat owners will find their lives enriched by their association with Pygmy goats.

Considering how long goats have been associated with man there remain a surprising number of MYTHS and MISCONCEPTIONS about them.

So, just for the record .....

1. *ALL goats do not smell, only the entire male has the characteristic odour.*
2. *Goats will not 'eat anything'. Careless feeding is an excellent way to kill a goat.*
3. *Goats will NOT replace the lawn-mower.*
4. *Goats must not be tethered out to fend for themselves.*
5. *HAPPY, CONTENTED GOATS ARE NOT NOISY.*
6. *Goats are not naturally aggressive or bad-tempered. The butting seen between goats establishes a 'pecking order' and results in a calm, peaceful herd. Goats do not butt people unless foolish owners teach them to.*
7. *Goats do not spend their days trying to escape unless they are lonely and bored.*
8. *Goats are herd animals and NEED COMPANY OF THEIR OWN KIND. Never keep just one goat, always have two or more. Lonely goats are unhappy and unhappy goats are not easy to live with.*

and finally, about Pygmy goats in particular,

10. *Pygmy goats are a NATURALLY tiny breed from Africa. They are NOT starved, or 'bred down' versions of larger, dairy breeds.*
11. *Despite their country of origin, and size, Pygmy goats are not 'delicate'. They are very hardy.*
12. *Pet goats are not worthless, they can bring their owners great joy and pleasure if properly cared for.*

part one: PETS

HOUSING.

Some Pygmies are invited into their owner's home for short visits but it would be neither practical, nor good for them, to live indoors permanently.

Your pets will need a house of their own. If at all possible position their house close to your own as Pygmy goats benefit from being able to feel part of the family. Owners benefit too, with a shorter walk to reach pets in bad weather. The door of the goat house should open into their play area or paddock.

A timber garden shed of 2.4m x 1.8m (8'x 6') is quite suitable for two pets although other buildings such as stables could be converted if they are available. Whatever is chosen must be weather-proof draught-free and well-ventilated. Pygmy goats are very hardy and seem unaffected by cold weather but almost all hate rain and must, therefore, have free access to their house at all times.

The following points should be noted:

The CEILING HEIGHT should suit the owner, not the Pygmies, if cleaning out is not to be a headache.

WINDOWS must be out-of-reach or protected.

Timber FLOORS may be covered with a sheet of water-proof flooring (e.g. linoleum) well nailed down.

A stable-type DOOR provides more protection as the top can remain closed, while the open bottom half allows the Pygmies freedom of choice.

A LOCK on the door is strongly recommended to keep your Pygmies safe at night. Some Pygmies are good at opening door handles and gate catches these are best positioned out-of-reach.

LIGHTING is not essential, but may be useful during the Winter. Keep all wires and switches away from the inquisitive Pygmy. Battery lights could be used.

FURNISHINGS.

A HAY RACK will be needed. This saves a lot of wastage (but not all) as goats are fussy about hay. Bars should be about 50mm (2") apart, or use an off-cut from chain-link fencing. Position the bottom of the rack about 600mm (24") from ground level. A hinged lid will prevent Pygmies trying to jump in. NEVER USE A HAY NET. Goats may put a leg, or worse, their neck through the holes which can prove fatal.

Pygmy goats will appreciate a BENCH in their house to play and sleep on. This should be about 450mm (18") in height and width and could be made from old floor boards.

A mineral lick HOLDER should be fixed in a suitable place. A wire RING, stapled to the wall, into which the water bucket may be placed will prevent spillage and if the bucket is raised above tail level soiling will be prevented. Do not position the bucket under the hay rack - the result would be 'hay soup'.

BEDDING.

A light covering of wood-shavings or straw, which should be swept out regularly, is suitable for Summer. In Winter a few inches of dry peat covered with about 6" of straw may be put down and topped up as necessary to keep the surface dry and clean. This saves work and will remain 'sweet' until the Spring cleanout but is not suitable for Summer as it does attract flies when the weather warms up. If preferred the Summer method can be continued through out the year, using a little more straw in Winter.

Choose straw carefully as some Pygmies, being perverse little souls, like to eat their freshly laid bed. Barley straw, if available, is usually the best choice. Gardeners will find used peat and straw bedding useful in the garden but wood shavings should be burnt.

Don't forget that storage will be required for a bale of straw and one or two bales of hay. Somewhere dry but airy is ideal.

FENCING.

A well-fenced play area or paddock is essential for Pygmy goats who will wreak havoc if allowed unsupervised access to the garden. Owners also have a legal responsibility to keep their pets properly confined.

Fencing should be at least 1200mm (4') high and designed with two main considerations in mind.

1. Pygmy goats can squeeze through very small holes.
2. They love to 'groom' by rubbing hard along the fence. This treatment quickly pushes lightweight unsupported wire netting out of shape.

Chain link fencing is ideal but expensive. Post and (three) rail fencing with 25mm (1") wire netting stapled to it is effective, as is a heavy gauge sheep netting.

TETHERING IS NOT A SUITABLE MEANS OF RESTRAINT FOR PYGMY GOATS. IF YOU WISH TO KEEP THEM A PROPERLY FENCED AREA MUST BE PROVIDED.

PLAY AREAS AND PADDOCKS.

Very small play areas should be paved. Grass will quickly become unpalatable and mud might be a problem on some soils. If only a small area is available take your Pygmies out for walks to add some variety to their lives.

Larger areas will benefit from a paved or concrete 'patio' in front of the house, and a hard path from house to gate.

Poisonous shrubs/trees within the play area MUST be removed. Others should be protected to prevent damage - goats enjoy nibbling at tree bark.

The grass in larger play areas/paddocks will need to be cut occasionally to keep it tidy.

THE PYGMY GOATS.

There are several choices facing the potential Pygmy goat owner. Colour, horned or disbudded, sex .. but first it may be helpful to study the summary of the P.G.C. Breed Standard which is given below. The full Breed Standard is issued to all Pygmy Goat Club members.

PYGMY GOAT BREED STANDARD - GREAT BRITAIN (summary)

The Pygmy goat is a small, cobby, compact goat. Head, neck and legs are short in relation to body length, the full-barrelled body suggesting a state of perpetual pregnancy. The overall picture being of an alert, attractive goat with pleasing proportions.

Mature females measure 406mm to 560mm (16" to 22") at the withers; mature males 406mm to 585mm (16" to 23"). Females are considered mature at 24 months males at 30 months.

Disbudded or horned goats are acceptable.

The colour range is wide, from cream to chocolate and from silver to black in either roan or 'self' colouring, highlighted by lighter ears and muzzle, a white star on the forehead, with cannons (socks) and face darker than the main body colour. These are specific markings. Pygmies are also found with random markings in one or more colours on a white background.

All colours are acceptable EXCEPT pure-white and the light, parallel facial markings known as 'Swiss' stripes. Both are Disqualifying faults, as are 'Roman' noses and pendulous (floppy) ears. All are signs that the goat is NOT a pure-bred Pygmy.

The coat varies in density and length according to season.

N.B. The natural wide-girth of the Pygmy should not be confused with obesity with excess fat distributed all over the body. This is undesirable.

SEX.

WETHERS. These are male Pygmy goats which were castrated before they became sexually active. In appearance they are generally slightly more solidly built than females but they do not develop the very masculine appearance of the entire male. Neither do they have his odour. **These little lads are the IDEAL choice for any one seeking Pygmy goats purely as pets.** They are quiet, friendly, inquisitive and great fun.

FEMALE Pygmy goats make good pets. It is not 'cruel' to keep them unmated and they do not become 'maiden milkers' as some highly developed dairy breeds do (i.e. producing milk without breeding). It is, however, necessary to consider one thing. **Female goats 'call' when in season.** This may not bother the owners but neighbours can be peculiarly sensitive to this sound and this must be borne in mind if buying females.

A FEMALE and a WETHER is a choice favoured by some. This is perfectly satisfactory, especially if they are twins. The wether may respond to the female when she is in season but this generally does no harm. This choice is less satisfactory if the owner plans to breed in the future. If space is limited the wether may be 'in the way' when the first kids arrive. There is also a risk that a wether kept with a heavily in-kid female could cause problems.

THE ENTIRE MALE DOES NOT MAKE A SUITABLE PET AND SHOULD NEVER BE BOUGHT AS ONE. Readers who need further convincing should turn to page **20**.

Whatever your final choice - BUY TWO - few owners can maintain the level of companionship required by a goat kept on its own. A lonely goat will be unhappy. Unhappy goats will be noisy, over-demanding and often exhibit other undesirable traits. For contentment all round - BUY TWO.

HORNED OR DISBUDDED ???

There are no naturally polled (hornless) Pygmy goats. Those without horns have been disbudded. Disbudding is a minor operation, carried out when the kid is a few days old, to remove the horn 'buds' and prevent the growth of horns. Breeders take their kids to the Vet. and the operation is carried out under general anaesthetic. Using this method ensures that the kids are not upset in any way. For the pet owner it is really simply a matter of personal preference but the following points should be noted:

Horned and disbudded Pygmies must not be mixed.

The operation to remove adult horns is a major one which would be very hard to justify just because an owner changed his/her mind at a later date.

There is considerable variation in the size/shape of Pygmy horns, your kids' relatives might provide a guide to what they will look like when mature.

Horns may offer slight protection but owners of ALL Pygmies must protect them from dangers such as stray dogs.

Few Pygmies use their horns aggressively but it is easier to handle disbudded Pygmy goats.

Disbudding is not cruel if the method outlined above is used. Certain methods are cruel and concerned purchasers should check this.

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RE-GROWTH sometimes occurs on disbudded Pygmy goats. This is no-one's "fault" but some breeders will arrange to have this dealt with if the goat is returned to them and collected afterwards. Small, loose "scurs" which do not show through the hair may be knocked off during play, but larger scurs should always be checked as neglect of these can result in the growth of deformed horns, so it is most important to have them dealt with.

AGE TO BUY.

It is best to start with kids. Do not be tempted to buy unweaned kids, choose those which are at least 12 weeks old. At this age they can be started on the normal adult diet and bottle-feeding will be unnecessary.

COST.

Prices for Pygmy goats vary considerably but an *average* of £40 for wethers and £70 for pet females may be taken as a guide. Things such as horned or disbudded, vaccinated and having a verifiable pedigree should be taken into consideration.

WHERE TO BUY FROM.

As with all animals, it is best to go to a reputable breeder who will show you relatives of the kids, spend time answering questions and provide an 'after sale' service of dealing with queries which might occur as you learn to care for your new pets.

If necessary visit several breeders before making your final choice. If you have something specific in mind it may be necessary to book kids. You should expect to pay a deposit when you order. This would be returned if your choice was unavailable for some reason.

Buying from auctions, markets etc offers none of the benefits mentioned above. It is a sad fact that some people still believe that any smallish scrub goat is a pygmy and many people have been disappointed to discover otherwise AFTER buying some appealing, over-priced kid from a dubious source.

ALL owners of livestock (including Pygmy goats) must keep a Movement of Stock book noting dates and venues when animals leave the premises. A M.A.F.F. inspector may wish to see this in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

one-year-old, horned

Pygmy Wethers - the best choice for pets.

mature, disbudded

'pruning' trees!

A weather-proof garden shed (above) is quite suitable for two pet Pygmies.

Lonely goats will do anything to be near their owners (below).

COLLECTION DAY.

Complete the goat house and fencing before you collect your new pets, before leaving put down the bedding so they can move straight in.

Pygmy goats usually enjoy travelling by car, dozing for much of the journey. In an estate they could travel behind a dog guard, but the back seat is quite suitable if someone sits with them. Protect the car with a polythene sheet covered with newspaper.

Take collars with you, check the size with the breeder. Food and water will not be required unless the journey is very long (about 4 hours or more). Never feed concentrates before, during or straight after a journey. Hay or leafy twigs are suitable.

Unless covered on a previous visit, ask for a hoof-trimming demonstration; details of usual feeding times and amounts; date of birth; pedigree; P.G.C. Identity Register No. (if registered) if you are a P.G.C. member the cards will be forwarded to you. Write the information down!

Before leaving collect a small bag of the usual concentrates. Ask the breeder to put the collars on. This is no time for lead training but kids are slippery customers and collars provide a hand-hold. Carry the Pygmies to and from the car.

If you have to stop on the way home MAKE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN SOMEONE HAS HOLD OF BOTH KIDS/GOATS BEFORE ANY DOORS ARE OPENED. This also applies when you get home.

Carry them straight to their house and shut them in. Supply hay and water. Talk quietly to them and move slowly. They may be very noisy at first, don't worry, they will quieten as they become used to you and the new surroundings.

THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO INVITE EVERYONE ROUND TO SEE THE NEW ARRIVALS - there will be plenty of time for that when they have settled in.

Do not be in too much of a hurry to let them out into the play area, a day or two inside would do no harm while you get to know each other.

Introductions ...

a guide for Pygmy Goat owners-to-be.

After hearing what responsive/intelligent/ friendly animals Pygmy goats are new owners may be puzzled, or even dismayed, when they find that the behaviour of their pets, during the first few days, bears no relationship whatsoever to the above qualities.

At this stage it helps to bear in mind that the basic instinct of dogs and cats (pets with which most people are familiar) is that of 'hunter'. As such, a bold approach is 'natural' and timid animals may still be regarded with some misgivings. The 'hunted' goat did not survive by involving itself in unknown, and possibly dangerous, encounters. The basic instinct of the goat is to withdraw from the immediate vicinity and study the situation from a safe distance. Very frightened goats do not wait to see how things are progressing, they run.

Among the most comforting things to a Pygmy kid are familiar surroundings and routine happenings. The change to a new home is almost certainly the biggest upheaval the kid has had to face in its short life. Picture it from their point of view. An unknown person has 'snatched' them from their herd and made off with them to a strange place. Among the qualities which make Pygmy goats such interesting companions is the apparent possession of an active imagination. In times of stress they invariably imagine the worst.

The new owner can do much to reduce the stress by making the journey as quiet and uneventful as possible, and by having a secure pen/house ready for the new arrivals to be carried to immediately at the journeys end. Your kids should be offered hay, drinking water and PEACE.

Within reason, the smaller the area of initial confinement the better as it helps with the next stage, which is to prove that you are a gentle and harmless 'friend'. If you advance on them in a large area they will move away, the longer this >

'chase' goes on the more time they will have to imagine a gruesome end when they are finally 'captured'. Sitting and waiting for them to come to you may work, but it can take a long time for their natural curiosity to overcome the caution. In a small pen it is possible to sit in with them. They will be no more than about an armslength away and this is conducive to quiet conversation and bribery in the form of titbits.

The 'chase' element is eliminated and some Pygmies will be won over very quickly, others may take a few days to adjust. The process can be almost unbelievably abrupt - one minute a reserved and indecisive little goat, the next a bold animal happy to be handled and very confident with its owners.

It is inadvisable to allow your kids out into their paddock/play area until some understanding has been reached. Contented Pygmies do not test fence heights and escape routes. If the goat that has 'made friends' should discover a design fault in the fencing he/she is more likely to come and tell you about it than run away. (It should be mentioned that catching a Pygmy which does not want to be caught may not be strictly impossible, but the antics involved would not imprint 'kind' or 'gentle' on the minds of your new pets.)

Older, more worldly-wise, Pygmy goats may take a change of home in their stride but care should still be taken to help them settle quickly.

(reproduced from P.G. 'NOTES')

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Pygmy goats and dogs. Pygmy goats get along very well with SENSIBLE family pets but it is essential to carefully supervise introductions and to continue to be alert during the first weeks and months. All dogs have the capability to do grave harm to goats. Always protect your Pygmies from stray dogs.

FEEDING THEORY.

Pygmy goats are easy and economical to feed, but they have a digestive system unlike other, more common, pet animals and a basic understanding of this will help to avoid mistakes.

All healthy Pygmies take a great interest in food. This is not greed but reflects the fact that the goat is a ruminant designed to cope with the large quantities of bulky, hard to digest vegetation taken in when the goat eats its natural diet. Goats browse, taking in leaves, twigs, bark, some 'weeds' and a little grass at frequent intervals throughout the day. When not browsing they rest, and cud.

When food is swallowed it goes to the rumen which is the first and largest of the four chambers which make up the stomach of the goat. Here a careful balance of bacteria and micro-organisms get to work. At intervals partly digested food is returned to the mouth for further chewing. This is called cudding. When ready the food continues through the system.

Ruminants are not equipped to cope with sudden, drastic changes of diet. All new foods must be introduced gradually to give the rumen time to adjust.

The rumen is large because it is designed to cope with the goat's natural 'low value', high bulk diet. The Pygmy goat must not be permitted to fill the rumen with lush food or 'high value' concentrates. Goats cannot vomit to rid themselves of this kind of over-indulgence. What goes down, stays down, and causes serious problems which can in some cases be fatal.

Having said that it should be repeated that, if the above points are kept in mind, it is easy to feed Pygmy goats.

Free-range browsing is not available for most goats but hay is a good, safe substitute. Supplemented by a tiny ration of concentrates, some grazing and/or chopped vegetables and fruit. Some 'treats' in the form of twigs etc. and, of course, clean drinking water, the Pygmy goat owner will find it simple to keep his/her pets healthy.

FEEDING PRACTICE.

Hay is an essential part of the Pygmy goat's diet. Choose hay which smells pleasant and never buy bales which are musty or mouldy. Hay should be fed ad-lib throughout the year unless grazing is available. If it is, hay racks need only be filled at night during the Summer.

Concentrates is the collective name given to cereals, high protein 'cake' and pelletted animal feeds. Most feed merchants now sell concentrates specifically for goats. These come in 20/25kg bags. As concentrates do not have a long shelf life owners of two pets should not buy such a large amount and it might be better to try a pet shop where smaller quantities are available. BREEDERS VARY CONSIDERABLY IN THE AMOUNT OF CONCENTRATES THEY FEED SO IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ASK ABOUT THE TYPE OF FOOD AND THE AMOUNT WHICH YOUR PETS HAVE BEEN USED TO. Most breeders offer a bag of the usual mix when they sell goats so that new owners can change over gradually.

Pygmy goats graze quite well (although they will not mow your lawn to bowling green standards!) but if grazing is sparse or non-existent some 'succulents' should be added to the diet. This term covers fruit, vegetables (all kinds of clean kitchen 'waste' can be utilised, peel, trimmings from greens, pea pods etc. and 'weeds' such as docks, hogweed, plantains etc. Fruit and vegetables could be chopped up and served with the concentrate ration, or offered separately. Do not forget to introduce new items a little at a time.

A real 'treat' for any goat is a bundle of leafy twigs, brambles, rose prunings, hawthorn etc. Tie them up and hang them on the fence. In Winter a bare branch would provide entertainment and useful food as they pick the bark off. Most goats also enjoy other 'treats' such as dried bread but this should not be a major part of the diet.

Water is essential and it must be clean and fresh. Most goats enjoy warm drinking water.

Pygmy goats with good, mixed diets probably get all >

Feeding Practice .. continued.

the minerals they need but a Mineral lick should be available as added insurance. There is a lick especially for goats, ask your feed merchant.

Remember, when feeding your Pygmies, that they are individuals and all have slightly different likes and dislikes. There is often an initial resistance to a different type of hay, or new concentrates, which will be overcome in a few days, but some goats simply do not like certain things (which their companion adores) and it is pointless to persevere in the hope that there will be a change of mind. It is better to find an alternative.

Winter feeding. Many people feel the urge to increase the concentrate ration in the Winter 'to keep out the chills'. The rumen is an internal central heating system giving off heat as it works. It works hardest on hard-to-digest food such as tree bark and good hay and it is these which should be increased. Bran damped with hot water and mixed with the concentrates also makes some owners feel better as they offer the Pygmies a nice. warm feed in cold weather. It does no harm - but it doesn't actually do any good either.

Pygmy goats like routines. They like to know when to expect their next meal and will gently 'remind' owners who are late. For contentment on all sides plan the feeding times to suit YOUR routine, and stick to them. The following feeding patterns are those generally used.

Morning: ½ concentrate ration (plus fruit & veg.)
clean bucket of warm water
top up hay rack

mid-dayish: check hay rack (in winter)
offer some 'weeds', twigs etc.
if available.

Evening: as morning

NEVER FEED MOULDY, ROTTEN OR FROZEN/FROSTED FOOD.

POISONOUS PLANTS AND OTHER THINGS TO AVOID.

There are a large number of trees/shrubs/plants which are poisonous to some degree. Definite guidelines are difficult to provide because it is always possible to find someone whose goat has eaten 'that' without ill effect. Equally someone else may have had a goat which died after sampling the same plant. Eating something dubious 'on an empty stomach' may prove to be far worse than eating it when the rumen has a good 'lining' of hay. Free-range goats *may* learn to discriminate but others are not able to develop this talent and it is the owner's responsibility to identify dangerous plants and ensure that their Pygmy goats never have access to these.

If you are unable to identify a plant DO NOT offer it to your Pygmies.

All of the following are poisonous, the list is not complete but covers some of the more common species:

YEW, RHODODENDRON, LABURNAM AVOID AT ALL COSTS. also, Ragwort, Dog Mercury, Water Dropwort, all Nightshades, Hemlock, Cuckoo Pint, Foxgloves, Ground Elder, Hellebores, Meadow Saffron, Narcissi and other bulbs, Rhubarb, green potatoes and tops, tomato foliage, Privet, Clematis, most Evergreens, Spindle tree, Daphne, Bracken, Ivy berries (but not leaves), most 'indoor' plants.

Take care not to feed any plants which have been sprayed or treated with garden chemicals. Do not treat play area/paddock grass with any chemicals.

Grass cuttings should not be fed. They tend to heat up and become dangerous, there is also a danger of contamination from mower oil etc.

Non-plant poisoning may occur if Pygmies have access to old 'lead' paint, timber preservatives etc.

IF POISONOUS TREES GROW IN THE VICINITY CHECK THAT LEAVES HAVE NOT BLOWN IN AFTER HIGH WINDS.

GENERAL CARE.

Apart from correct feeding and adequate housing your pets will require regular hoof trimming, worming and an annual vaccination.

Hoof trimming is a task for the owner.

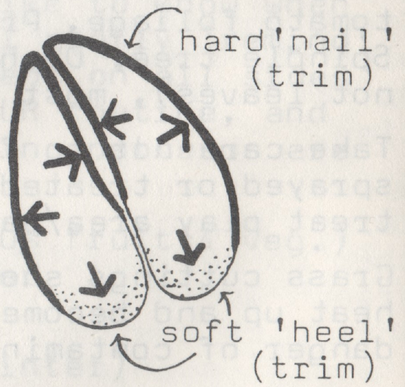
Hoof Trimming.

If left untrimmed goat hooves become overgrown and mis-shapen. Mud and stones may be trapped and foot rot is more likely to occur. Monthly trimming will ensure that this is a simple task and new owners may find it helpful to consider it the equivalent of trimming finger and toe nails, rather than as a major operation.

When you purchase your goats ask for a demonstration.

Good sharp secateurs (the kind with straight blades) are the safest tool to use. Knives are used by some breeders but tend to be a danger to goat hooves and owners' thumbs and are not recommended.

Treat your Pygmy gently when hoof trimming as they have long memories and this will be a regular event. It is easiest to have two people, one to hold and one to trim.
Gently (but firmly) take hold of a hoof and remove any mud. Lay blade of secateurs flat on the soft centre area and cut outwards in direction of arrows. Remove excess heel in same way, working gradually, until level with rest of foot. This method prevents cutting into the soft area which would cause pain and bleeding and should be carefully avoided. If an accident does happen use iodine on the cut.



Pygmies may be picked up and cuddled while hoof trimming takes place, or a 'farrier' style may be used as with shoeing horses.

A trip to the Vet. will be needed for the annual vaccination and he/she will also supply the correct wormer. Choice of Veterinary Surgeon is important as both products come in 'flock size' packs. A Vet. who deals with other goats or sheep will probably keep the items required in stock, others may be reluctant to obtain them just for two goats.

VACCINATION is required against enterotoxaemia which is generally fatal and occurs so quickly that no attempt at treatment is possible. Most goat-keepers vaccinate against this. Kids receive vaccinations at about 10 and 14 weeks. When you buy your kids ASK IF THEY HAVE BEEN VACCINATED. If not arrange a trip to your Vet. as soon as possible. If the kids have been vaccinated the next will be required in a year's time. The vaccine protects against several other things, including tetanus. A lump sometimes appears at the site of the vaccination but will disperse after a while.

WORMING. Pet Pygmies who do not mix with other livestock may only need worming twice a year. Ask your Vet. for advice about your particular circumstances. Liquid sheep wormers are best as they are easy to measure (the dose depends on the weight of the animal) and administration (orally) is within the capabilities of most owners. Ask your Vet. for a demonstration though, as careless 'drenching' can cause pneumonia.

The following method may be helpful:
Choose a time when Pygmies are in their pen/house. Fill plastic syringe with correct dose. Back goat into corner and stand astride shoulders, gripping gently to hold. Slip thumb into side of mouth between the front and back teeth (avoid back teeth which are lethal). Open mouth by holding lower jaw down as goat looks up, the head should be horizontal, the nose should not be pointing skywards. Insert the tip of the syringe into the opposite side of the mouth from your thumb. Squirt the wormer over the back of the tongue - the tongue must not be held down. Release goat, offer praise and reward.

HEALTH.

OBSERVATION. Owners should, as a matter of course, study their goats every time they see them. Their behaviour, condition and the droppings they produce are all pointers to the state of their health. Owners who are familiar with the signs of good health will quickly notice if something is wrong.

A very sick goat is unmistakeable and professional advice should be sought without delay. Goats with some minor problem may merely look pre-occupied or change their normal routine slightly. Such 'signs' should be very obvious to owners who really know their Pygmies.

Pet owners who feel that 'something is not quite right' should seek advice. It is unwise to wait a few days to see if things improve.

Pygmy goats are normally very healthy and this is not the place for an 'in depth' coverage of every thing which could go wrong. Rely on YOUR OBSERVATION and your VETERINARY SURGEON'S KNOWLEDGE. (Minor worries could be checked with the person from whom you purchased your Pygmies.) However, it may be helpful to mention one or two matters which are relevant to Pygmy goats.

BLOAT is caused by incorrect feeding and causes the left-hand side of the goat to become distended. People with experience of dairy goats do sometimes mistake the bulging sides of a well-fed Pygmy for this complaint and can worry new owners with their incorrect diagnosis. If your Pygmies look happy, are cudding and producing normal droppings there is no need for concern.

If Pygmies look very itchy and twitchy they should be dusted with louse powder. This can be done occasionally, even if no signs are present, as a preventative measure. Most Pygmies love to be groomed but do not brush out the protective, woolly undercoat which grows in the Autumn, until the warmer Spring weather arrives.

SCOURING (diarrhoea) can be caused by a minor indiscretion in feeding, it can also signal the onset of serious disease. If a scouring adult looks at all unwell contact your Vet. If the goat looks fit, apart from the scouring, he/she should be kept inside with fresh drinking water and ONLY hay to eat for 24 hours. If this has no effect seek advice. It is unwise to leave scouring kids without attention as they can quickly become de-hydrated, seek advice.

If you see your Pygmy eating something poisonous do not wait for symptoms, seek advice. Rhododendron poisoning causes goats to vomit. This is very serious and professional advice should be obtained without delay.

BLOCKED URINARY TRACT is NOT common but is mentioned here because more Pygmy wethers are kept than males of other breeds. The problem is limited to male goats and a large number of different causes have been put forward over the years. Latest information seems to suggest that a dirty or limited water supply and too many concentrates/too little roughage is the probable cause. Goats may refuse water (and food) if it is offered in 'tainted' buckets or dishes. The taint may not be apparent to the owner. Always supply fresh water twice daily, scrub out buckets and dishes regularly and rinse well. Check water consumption by noting the level in the bucket, it will vary depending on the diet (less if grass is available, more when a lot of hay is eaten) but it should be possible to gain a reasonable impression.

Two matters unconnected with 'health' but which can cause concern are: TEETH - goats have teeth at the bottom only in the front, top and bottom at the back. The 'milk' teeth are replaced gradually until there is a full mouth of permanent teeth at about 4 years. Do not worry about them losing their 'baby' teeth. Secondly, if you allow your goats to pull when on their leads (or if you drag them along) they will almost certainly 'COLLAPSE' in a very frightening manner. When pressure on the collar is removed they will recover but the experience is best avoided by very careful use of the collar and lead.

THE PYGMY STUD GOAT (excerpt from P.G. 'NOTES')

The P.G.C. has gone to some lengths to put across the message that the entire male SHOULD NOT be the choice of people seeking pets.

Many entire male kids, thoughtlessly acquired during the Spring or Summer, become the subject of phonecalls which begin 'I must find a new home for ...' during the first Autumn or Winter. Odour and/or noise are usually at the root of this sudden decline in what had been a very cosy relationship and owners may be very upset that their pet has become 'unsuitable'.

As young kids there is little difference between the male and the female, but as the male kid matures so do his scent glands and before the end of his first year he will begin to smell. Some say stink! The intensity of the odour varies with the season, the individual animal and the sensitivity of the nose of the onlooker. Degrees of tolerance vary from 'don't mind' to 'can't stand' but most agree that it is tenacious in its staying power and not wanted on clothes, indoor furnishings and the like. Descenting is a minor operation which can be performed by a vet and this will reduce the odour until it is barely noticeable.

This scheme is foiled in part by the male's habit of spraying his chest and front legs with urine. If he looks round to see how things are progressing, whoops, it gets all over his face too. This habit does tend to lose the male goat some friends and it will be seen that any continuing 'meaningful relationship' is best conducted without resort to hugging, cuddling and nuzzling. At least, not in the Winter.

A certain amount of washing is required to combat the effects of excessive spraying and it may be necessary to rub cream or oil into the skin to prevent soreness. All this adds up to considerably more work than is involved when keeping females or wethers. Work that needs to be carried out during the cold, Winter months. >

The question of noise can be of great importance to people with 'touchy' neighbours. Until heard it is impossible to imagine the vocal versatility of the frustrated male. And the entire male kept purely as a pet WILL BE frustrated!

Male Pygmy goats kept with female goats will breed, there is none of the 'it might be nice if they did' about it. Unless there is something very wrong, they WILL. Most owners need to limit these activities and separate accommodation will be required, at the very least for part of the year. The male deserves, and should have, a house and exercise area which is as good as that allotted to the females. More space is required for this, and more expense for fencing etc.

So stud goats do not make good pets because they require more care, extra facilities and a slighty different approach from their owners. They are essentially working animals. They enjoy their work very much and, in the Autumn and Winter, it does occupy their minds for a great deal of the time. For these reasons they are better limited to homes where they have a useful role to play, and where their behaviour is accepted and understood.

Another reason why the entire male should not be a casual purchase or acquired just because 'the poor little chap needed a good home and nobody else wanted him' concerns the future of the breed.

Males chosen for stud duties should be selected with the utmost care, with a clear idea of how they will improve the offspring of the females they are used on. Only the very best males should be considered for stud duties and even these should only be kept if there is a definite, working home waiting for them.

FOR ALL THOSE LOVELY DESIRABLE MALE QUALITIES OF GENTLENESS, CALMNESS AND GOOD-NATURE, WITHOUT THE LUST ..... CHOOSE WETHERS.

COMMUNICATION.

If you do not train your goats your goats will train you! They are intelligent, imaginative and well able to achieve this feat with unsuspecting owners. You have been warned.

Training a goat requires certain skills. The 'me master, you slave' approach does not work but a 'let's sit down and work out what will be most beneficial to both of us' is usually successful.

It is very important to TALK to your Pygmy goats. You will be amazed at what they seem to understand and tone of voice is an important means of control. It is essential to listen too. The Pygmy is an eloquent communicator expressing worry, concern, 'do I really have to do this','You are late with the food' etc etc. If you hear a loud snort it is always worth investigating as this is reserved for 'suspect' intruders, either animal or human.

Pygmy goats like routines and the sooner these are established the better. It will not be realised just how useful it is to have the Pygmies knowing what they should do, or where they should go, until you try to change it.

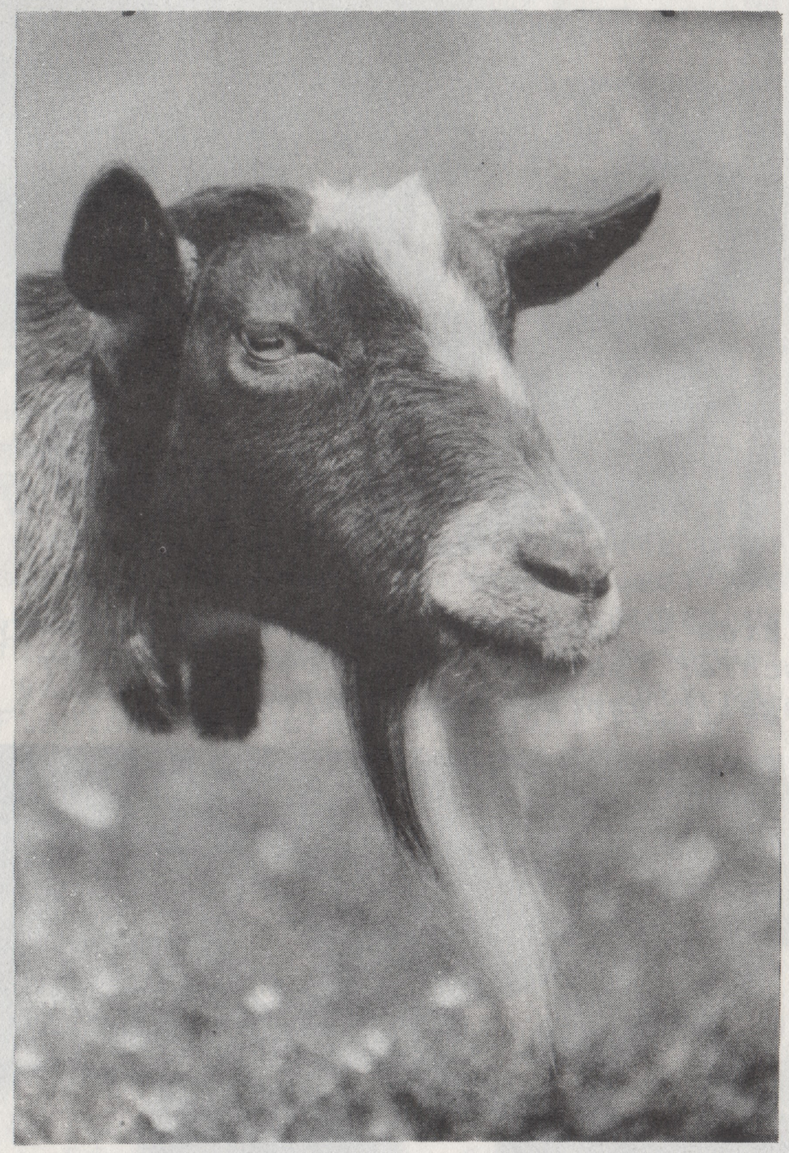
Lead training is important. Start in a confined area with lots of praise and 'rewards' before venturing outside.

Train your goats never to follow you through the play area gate. Eventually 'STAY' will keep them on 'hold' while you struggle in with wheelbarrows etc.

Do NOT teach your Pygmies to butt by playing butting games with them, and DON'T teach them to jump fences. the latter is often achieved by taking one goat out and leaving the companion behind, alone.

It is NOT possible to teach Pygmies not to eat the roses, or any other plants, vegetables etc. Nibbling at vegetation is just too much part of their lives to prevent them.

Above all, COMMUNICATE with your Pygmies there are few other animals which it is so rewarding to know.



Gentle, responsive and very intelligent indeed.

Pygmy kids - just two days old and already in mischief (above), don't be mislead by the angelic expressions (below)!!

For the sake of simplicity the term 'pet' Pygmy is used in this booklet to describe non-breeding animals. The term 'breeder' is used for anyone who owns Pygmy goats who are producing kids. In reality many owners of large breeding herds think of, and treat, their Pygmies as pets. The term breeder has no professional implications.

part two: BREEDING

THIS SECTION BEGINS ON A DELIBERATELY DISCOURAGING NOTE .....

Young Pygmy kids are so appallingly captivating that it is easy to think only of the fun involved in having these charming little characters around for a few months every year, without considering the drawbacks and responsibilities involved in breeding Pygmy goats.

Owners of two or three non-breeding pets need accept responsibility for the health, welfare and happiness of these animals only. If owners decide to breed from their Pygmy goats that responsibility must also extend to those kids which they cause to be born. Finding suitable, permanent homes for Pygmy goats is not always easy and if breeders are unable to keep their surplus stock hard decisions have to be faced.

The results of over-production and irresponsible ownership are plain to see in other, longer established, pet animals. Many unwanted dogs and cats roam the streets or wait in rescue centres in the hope of eventually securing a new home.

It is only by adopting a thoughtful and restrained attitude NOW that breeders will prevent the Pygmy goat from suffering a similar fate in years to come.

An unjustified belief which may tempt some people to think of breeding Pygmy goats is the idea that there is money to be made from the project. It may be possible to 'break even' in certain circumstances but there are no grounds whatsoever for believing that breeding Pygmy goats would be a sound, or

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desirable, business proposition. There are no great profits to be made if Pygmies are properly cared for and given the attention they deserve.

Breeding Pygmy goats should be looked upon as a hobby. Full of interest, excitement and fun but carefully balanced with the need to retain a serious and responsible attitude.

It is hoped that, from these comments, it will be deduced that breeding Pygmy goats is not a decision to be taken lightly.

Further points which should be taken into consideration include the following:

Housing needs will differ slightly from those required for pet goats.

More exercise space would be desirable, essential if the intention is to build a larger herd.

Demands on the owner's time increase considerably and it becomes more difficult to organise breaks unless someone who knows the routine will cope while you are away.

Pygmies are generally very healthy and because they are naturally small are quite capable of kidding unaided. However, in the event of problems occurring it would be quite possible to acquire the kind of Vet's bill which is seldom, if ever, seen by owners of pet Pygmies.

The cost of keeping a couple of Pygmies is quite negligible. It may seem too obvious to be worth mentioning but .... breeders who have to buy in hay for 10 or 20 Pygmies WILL notice the cost and the bills for concentrates, succulents, mineral licks and veterinary essentials such as worming and vaccination also ALL increase accordingly.

YOU STILL WANT TO BREED PYGMY GOATS ..... ????

Once the decision to breed Pygmy goats has been made some thought should be given to the kind of breeding programme which will be most suitable for the space available and the time which the owner can devote to the hobby. Careful planning at the start will mean that, even if starting in a very small way, it will be easier to extend housing and paddocks as the herd size increases.

There are many variations but choices fall into three main categories.

1. Owning two or three females; making use of males at stud; selling all kids.

N.B. Requires little more space than that required for pets. IRON WILL is required to sell ALL kids. Thought must be given to the future when original females are aged. Will there be room to pension them off? Must they be culled to make space for replacements? etc.

2. Starting with two females and building up a small/large herd, with or without own male/s.

The above two categories cover the majority of peoples' plans for breeding and this booklet concentrates on these.

There is a third category,

3. Starting with a breeding 'unit' of several females and a male and allowing them free-range in near natural conditions with little owner contact.

N.B. If suitable conditions are available Pygmies would be hardy enough to adapt to such a life. Attempting this with too little land would prove disastrous for both the landscape (which would be ruined) and the Pygmy goats who would suffer very badly indeed.

Almost ALL Pygmy goat breeders will find it necessary to retain control over their goats' whereabouts (with adequate fencing) and their reproduction (by separating males from females for at least part of the year).

PYGMY PECULIARITIES:

BREEDING SEASON.

Goats which originate from close to the Equator do not have the limited breeding season found in other breeds and it is quite possible to arrange for Pygmy kids to be born in almost any month of the year. Owners who exercise no control will find that their Pygmies will not only achieve this all by themselves, but may also produce two sets of kids per year.

SIZE IN RELATION TO BREEDING.

Pygmy goats are naturally tiny, they have not been artificially bred down in size. Therefore their size does not cause any kidding problems in itself. However if malpresentations occur (as happen occasionally with all breeds) there is less space to attempt correction in the Pygmy goat.

AGE FOR BREEDING.

Well-grown Pygmy females may be mated at 7 months to kid around their first birthday. Very small females may be better left until the following year. Very early, and undesirable, matings may occur if male and female kids are reared together. Separate at 10 weeks.

MILK PRODUCTION.

Pygmy goats have not been bred for milk production in excess of their natural capabilities and problems associated with over-production seldom occur. Owners who do not wish to milk may safely leave their Pygmies to manage their own milk supply without interference. They will feed their young and dry themselves off when appropriate. If a kid dies at birth or when kids leave for new homes at around 14 weeks some owners prefer to ease the resulting very tight udder for a few days but this may not be strictly necessary. Pygmy goats do not become 'maiden' milkers.

INFORMATION ON MILKING WILL BE FOUND ON PAGE **48**

CHOOSING FOUNDATION STOCK.

Start your breeding programme with two females.

Do not be side-tracked into buying a female and a wether and do not buy, rescue or otherwise acquire a female and an entire male. People who feel they cannot travel to a stud male because of distances involved should start with at least two, preferably three, females and a good male.

Study the Pygmy Goat Breed Standard and choose Pygmies who conform to this and who have parents who also conform. It should be noted that the Standard describes the IDEAL and there is no such thing as the PERFECT Pygmy goat (maybe you will be the one to breed this phenomenon!!). Anyone believing that they have such an animal is not likely to be offering it for sale.

Buying from a source where parents and other relatives can be seen will provide a better guide than buying goats of unknown ancestry.

Goats with 'Disqualifying' faults should not be used for breeding.

It may be possible to buy adult Pygmies and these do give the opportunity to see the mature animal, rather than having to guess about a kid's potential. If they have kidded previously this may also provide a guide to their capabilities in this area. Older, heavily-built females who have not kidded previously may not be a good choice, and be cautious about buying in-kid Pygmies. It is very difficult to be absolutely certain that a Pygmy goat is in-kid, the shape provides few clues and it is essential to buy only from a reputable source.

On the whole kids are probably a better choice as expertise in care, feeding etc. can be gained, and it is possible to get to know the animal, before starting on the breeding programme.

It would be almost impossible to buy a trained, Pygmy milker - those with ambitions to milk their Pygmies should choose kids and train them, when the time comes, to suit themselves.

HORNED OR DISBUDDED ??

This may be simply a matter of personal preference for pet owners but for breeders there are other matters to be taken into consideration before the final decision is made.

Owners who keep their goats for ornamental purposes or whose animals are mainly free-range would almost certainly be better to keep their goats horned. Under such conditions disbudding has few benefits and a number of distinct drawbacks.

However, most Pygmy goats are kept in far from natural (although no less satisfactory) ways and it is these breeders who may consider the possibility of keeping a disbudded herd.

Disbudding is, without doubt, a liability for the breeder and firm views in favour of this practice should be held to overcome the disadvantages.

Disbudding must be arranged within the first week of life and it is no mean task to ferry large numbers of kids to the Vet. for their operations.

The cost should be taken into consideration as it does add to the cost of rearing kids.It may be as well to mention that taking kids to the Vet. who will use a general anaesthetic is the ONLY acceptable method of disbudding, there must be no cheap (and cruel) alternatives.

Re-growth (if it occurs) must be taken seriously which may involve another trip to the Vet.

Whilst the operation (properly carried out) does not cause the kid any distress or harm it does ruin their looks temporarily at a time when they should be at their most photogenic.

Horned and disbudded Pygmies SHOULD NOT BE MIXED. Separate accommodation must be provided if both types are to be kept.

HOUSING.

Housing requirements will obviously be governed by the number of Pygmy goats the breeder is planning to keep. The following points are important:

1. Every female should have an individual pen to kid in. It is helpful if she can be moved into this at night about 8 weeks before the kidding date and remain in it at night for several weeks after the birth. These pens can be permanent structures for year-long use (work increases as each pen will require its own water supply and hay rack) or temporary for use during the kidding season, the house returning to communal use after kiddings. Kidding pens must be well-constructed.
2. Existing buildings are often converted, but if starting from scratch choose a house which is about 3.65m (12') wide, this can be extended as needed in length and divides neatly into 1.2m (4') pens down each side with a generous alley-way in the centre. Larger goat houses should have more than one door. This will prevent a mischievous 'senior' keeping 'juniors' outside in rainy weather.
3. If male/s are to be kept they MUST have separate accommodation.
4. If males are to be offered at stud it is helpful to have accommodation for visiting females. This should preferably be arranged so they do not have to mix with your own females.

FURNITURE AND BEDDING.

As for pet Pygmies. Increase hay rack length to suit number of Pygmies. It is usually better to provide several smaller racks rather than one large one. Make sure sufficient drinking water is available, keep water buckets away from imminently expectant females.

Lighting in pet Pygmy houses may be a luxury but in the kidding area reliable, good lighting will prove to be very useful indeed.

FENCING.

Again, as for pet Pygmies, but special attention should be paid to make sure there are no gaps in, or under, the fence for tiny kids to squeeze through.

Fences which divide paddocks (with goats on both sides) will probably require more attention than those around the boundary. Pygmies will 'spar' with their neighbours, particularly if they are visitors. Males are happiest if they can see their ladies in the adjoining paddock but they can be hard on fences when in-season females are 'flirting' with them from the other side.

PLAY AREAS AND PADDOCKS.

Breeders who intend to limit their 'herd' to two females may need no more space than the minimum required for two pets. Anyone intending to enlarge their herd beyond this should start to think in terms of small 'paddock' rather than 'play area'.

Young kids need to play. The jumping and skipping helps them to develop strong legs and everyone should make an effort to provide secure boxes or something similar for them to jump on and off. Do not position such structures near to the fence!

Some breeders with flat paddocks construct permanent 'mountains' - platforms of timber or stone construction which are appreciated by kids and adults (who like to laze in the sun) alike.

If a male is to be kept he must have his own exercise area or small paddock. As mentioned above he will like to be able to see his females but if his paddock opens into theirs it is most useful to have two gates with a small entrapment area between. Even well-trained males may forget to 'Stay' when there is the temptation of in-season females to occupy their minds.

Pygmy Females.

In Winter a bare branch provides entertainment.

Young, adult Pygmy female.

FEEDING.

The normal 'maintenance' ration for pet Pygmies may be fed to all breeding animals unless they are in-kid, feeding kids or being milked. There are no benefits to be gained from over-feeding. Fat Pygmy goats will not be healthy and may not, if very obese, be in suitable condition for breeding.

The In-kid Female should receive her normal ration until 8 weeks before kidding - see page 34 .

The Newly-kidded Female - see page 39.

Most females maintain good condition with double helpings of concentrates but discretion should be used. If feeding triplets (or more) or being milked she may benefit from a further slight increase.

When kids leave home, or milking ceases, the concentrates should be decreased to the normal maintenance ration.

Stud Males. Some owners like to increase their ration of concentrates if they are working hard. If they are maintaining good condition it may not be necessary. Some male goats think so much about sex during the breeding season that they ignore food but Pygmy males tend to be better adjusted in this respect and do eat up their rations properly.

Kids reared naturally obtain milk from their mother and also share her hay, concentrates and other food. The bottle-fed Pygmy kid is very rare indeed but a guide to quantities is given here for information. Goats milk (preferably Pygmy) should be used at a temperature of about 102°F.

0 - 1 week	6 feeds of 1	- 2oz.
1 - 2 weeks	4 feeds of 2	- 3oz.
2 - 4 weeks	3 feeds of 4	- 6oz.
4 - 6 weeks	2 feeds of 8	- 10oz.
6 - 10 weeks	1 - 2 feeds	gradually dilute with water and reduce amount.

Offer hay and a little concentrates from about 3 days. Milk quantities are a GUIDE only do not over-feed. Pygmy mothers limit the milk their kids take, they do not allow them to drink their fill.

BREEDING.

This can be divided into four stages as follows:

1. Identifying oestrus and arranging mating.
2. Care of the in-kid female.
3. Kidding.
4. Rearing kids.

Information on these four stages is given on the following pages with a guide to care and feeding etc. provided in chronological order.

1. 'AND SO TO STUD..' (reproduced from P.G.'NOTES')

The average gestation period for Pygmy goats is 150 days but most kids arrive a few days early while a few wait until after the expected date.

Oestrus occurs at intervals of approx. 18-21 days. Male goats may be able to detect this throughout the year but the signs are only obvious to humans during the Autumn and Winter. This is loosely translated by some mature females who make sure their owners know ALL about their condition from July right through until April,if not mated.

Youngsters in their first year may wait until Oct/ Nov. before showing any signs at all.

Indications of oestrus include puffy vulva with slight clear discharge, twitching tail, mounting other goats and CALLING. The last frequently makes investigation of other 'signs' unnecessary. This may last for a few hours, up to 2-3 days in mid-Winter. It may be some consolation to know that most in-season females do not expect their 'lovers' to arrive at night and are consequently silent during the hours of darkness.

To add variety to the would-be breeder's life some females moon around the paddock with a far-away expression and forgo all the other signs. This usually occurs when waiting for definite proof to warrant driving 'x' miles to a stud goat, almost never when it has been decided not to breed that year.

'And so to Stud ..' continued.

Pygmy females will only 'stand' for the male when in-season so it is necessary to pay some attention to when oestrus occurs.

There are several options when taking your female to stud. Most common (and hectic) is to set off as soon as you know she is in-season, have her mated and return with her immediately. Slightly more leisurely for everyone is to calculate when the next season is due and arrange for her to be boarded during that week. Thirdly, a female may be boarded from just before one season until after the time when the next would have been due. This is mainly for females who have experienced problems in the past, but can also be useful for owners who favour Winter holidays away from it all.

Whichever you decide it is important to give the owner of the stud goat plenty of warning of your intentions. Arrange a tentative date as soon as possible and confirm this nearer the time.

Even well-cared for males may leave a slight odour on your female so on THE DAY wear suitable clothing and make sure the car is protected with a plastic sheet. If you only have two females you may as well take them both, even if only one is to be mated, they will be more content if allowed to stay together.

After mating watch carefully when the next season is due. If your female does not 'hold' the first time she will be entitled to a free service.

N.B. Some Pygmies appear to come into season for a very short spell and will stand for the male, but then come into season 'properly' later in the same week. If mated again they hold to the second service. This pattern can cause much confusion and may account for some failed matings because owners do not expect to see another season so soon after an apparently successful mating. If dates are carefully noted for ALL possible 'seasons' the pattern should become clear. Boarding for the whole week would probably be advisable.

2. 'PYGMY PREGNANCIES' (reproduced from 'NOTES')

Your Pygmy has passed the 'three weeks after mating' date without a murmur or a twitch of the tail.

So what now ?

Take a calendar on which is marked the date of your lady's last visit to her true-love (isn't it?) count forward 150 days and mark that date.

This is unlikely to be kidding day but it gives a guide to work from and you never know, she might decide to conform, just this once. From this date count back eight weeks. Mark that date.

And then forget about it. Treat her normally (it is assumed that very rough games with children or dogs are NOT normal); feed her normally; DO NOT PAMPER, apart from the normal spoilt-rotten way you always do of course.

Eight weeks to go. Some Pygmies may be bulging with kids at this stage, others will be discreetly hiding their 'secret'. This is the time to start gradually increasing the concentrate ration (based on a usual daily ration of 4oz.) this should be increased to 8oz. with two weeks to go. If individual pens are available this is the best time to start penning the in-kid females separately at night. It allows the concentrates to be rationed more accurately and gives plenty of time for the female to get used to the new routine.

Four weeks to go. Hooves should be trimmed for the last time prior to kidding. If your Pygmy struggles and finds this an ordeal, or if she is very heavily in-kid it would be better to stop trimming earlier.

Two weeks to go. Vaccinate to protect the mother and kid/s against enterotoxaemia. If the mother is vaccinated at this time she will pass on protection to the kids which will last until they have their own vaccinations at 10 and 14 weeks.

Seven to ten days to go. Clean out and scrub pen, make sure water bucket is positioned so that the kid/s cannot fall into it at birth. The kidding pen must be secure (no gaps) so that new-born kids cannot crawl out.

In-kid ladies should follow their normal routine as closely as possible right up to the birth. Allow them to go out as usual but make sure there is no bullying and do not allow them to squeeze through small gaps.

Most Pygmy kids are born before the 150 day deadline so do be alert during the last seven days. If you have to go out it would be a wise precaution to put 'imminent' females in their pens. Better still, cancel all appointments for the last few days!

Pygmy goats are naturally small so their size does not create kidding problems, most kiddings are simple and quick. If this is kept firmly in mind it may be possible to approach 'your' first kidding with calmness and lack of concern approaching that of your Pygmy goat.

THE KIDDING KIT will grow with experience, start with the essentials:

Kitchen paper or clean (old) towels for drying the kid/s.

Antibiotic powder (obtain from your Vet.) for the kid's navel as soon as possible after birth.

The Vet's telephone number.

New plastic syringe (for colostrum if needed).

Hot water bottle (seldom needed by kid/s, useful for owners on long, night vigils) as is a good book!

A torch - but reliable permanent lighting is so much better if at all possible.

3. JUST KIDDING ? (reproduced from P.G.'NOTES')

Most Pygmy goats are quite capable of kidding alone and unaided. In fact, the very best births from everyone's point of view are those when the unsuspecting owner opens the goat house door a few days before the anticipated date to find fluffy, well-fed offspring already acquainting themselves with the art of the caprine 'skip', while mum looks on contentedly.

However, many owners make an effort to be present at the birth and, in the event of a problem occurring, vigilance at this time can prove invaluable. Also, some mothers-to-be give every indication that the presence of someone to 'hold a hoof' and murmur comforting words is much appreciated.

If a note was made of the approximate kidding date (150 days from date of service) there will be a choice of about ten days (and nights) during which kidding could occur, a few days early being the most probable choice.

To stand a chance of being with your female in her hour of need it helps to know the signs which indicate that kidding is near, but kidding provides many opportunities for the Pygmy who likes to be different and the governing factor as to whether a birth is attended or not often owes far more to luck than any expertise on the part of the owner.

For the owner who really knows his/her Pygmies the most reliable sign, during the last week, is a change in normal behaviour. This may seem quite insignificant but can be sufficient to alert the aware owner.

The usual lists of signs that kidding is near include: a slight discharge from the vulva; nest-building (digging in bedding with hoof); her sides feeling tauter; tail ridging up from hips; staying close to the house when let out; anxious calling when she sees you.

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These signs may also mean (in order): a false alarm; she has found a particularly tasty strand of straw; not quite sure what they looked like before; ditto tail; it looks like rain; the hay rack is empty.

However, during the last week before K-day, you ignore these 'signs' at your peril. The udder may become more prominent weeks before the birth but a sudden filling and tightening may be considered hopeful.

In almost all systems of keeping Pygmy goats the best place for kidding to occur is in an individual pen. This gives the owner some control over cleanliness, but most of all it provides the female with peace and security where she will not be worried by other goats, and where the kids will receive her undivided attention. I feel this is such a fundamental requirement that breeding should not be started unless this facility can be provided.

When kidding is thought to be near the female should be placed in her pen, with bedding pressed down to prevent kids becoming tangled, and the water bucket removed.

Kids may be born with astonishing speed, but the 'first stage' can take hours. The female reclines in her pen fully occupied by the pleasant occupation of cud-chewing, or picking at a little hay, barely interrupted by an occasional slight strain.

Hard, regular straining, possibly accompanied by a hearty yell, signals the start of the 'second stage'. The kid should be born within the next hour so make a note of when the second stage begins

The normal presentation is two front hooves with, a little further back, the nose of the kid, all contained in a fluid-filled membrane but this may have broken before the feet appear.

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When the kid is born the mother will usually get up to inspect the fruits of her labour and this will break the cord. The owner should ensure that the kid can breathe freely, if necessary cleaning the nose of the kid (kitchen paper or an old, clean towel should be to hand) and then the female may be left to dry the kid. They are rather good at it!

Although Pygmy kids need no artificial heat, even in the depths of Winter, it is important that they should be dried quickly or they will become chilled. If a first kidder finds the task a bit 'yucky' or a second (or more) kid arrives in a hurry it is better to help rather than risk this.

The next requirement on the agenda is colostrum, the first milk, with which the female provides the kid with a defence system of anti-bodies. Resist the almost overwhelming temptation to 'help' as the kids fumble their way to the teats. Milky fingers getting in the way only add to the confusion. A watch should be kept though, and if success has not been achieved within 3 or 4 hours assistance should be given.

Do not forget the needs of the new mother, she will appreciate a warm drink (some love oatmeal gruel others prefer plain water). A little of the wettest bedding should be replaced with a dry layer.

The afterbirth will come away within a few hours of the birth. It must never be pulled, leave it to clear naturally. When dropped remove and burn or bury it. If you find the female obviously cleansed (with no strands hanging from her) but cannot find the afterbirth she will have eaten it. This harms the owner's sensibilities but will not cause any problems for the goat. She is just responding to natural instinct.

With kid/s dry and feeding, and mother cleansed, THAT'S IT. ALL OVER - A LOVELY, NORMAL KIDDING.

AFTER KIDDING.

For approximately three meals after the birth the mother should not receive her normal concentrate ration. Returning too quickly to the full ration may cause metabolic disorders associated with milk production, it will almost certainly cause the female to scour. In place of concentrates feed bran slightly moistened with warm water and chopped fruit and/or vegetables. Oven-dried bread could be added to the mix. Normal concentrates should be re-introduced gradually, replacing the bran with a little more each day until the normal pre-kidding ration is reinstated at the end of about five days. Feed the concentrates in wide, shallow bowls so that the kids can start to sample them too.

Good hay, and warm water, should be offered ad-lib.

Kids to be disbudded should be booked in at about 3-5 days (it must be possible to feel their horn buds), castration (also a task for the Vet.) is better left until about 14 days.

The female will start a reddish discharge about a week after kidding, this is normal and will continue intermittently for a further week or so.

If kids are to mix with other herd members it is useful to introduce them within the first day or two. Other adults may then become used to them while the kids are relatively slow and well-behaved. They should be taken out and allowed to toddle in the paddock with mum for a few minutes if the weather is reasonable. The outing should be closely supervised. Older goats are normally very patient, but kids need to be taught that 'Aunty' does not provide sustenance and early introductions allow the others to take a look at the newcomers before they start trying to break any 'rules', behaviour which would bring quite justified, if limited, retribution. Most adults 'pull their punches' with youngsters, the main danger being if the kid is pushed onto a hard surface or sharp corner. For this reason wide open spaces are better than goat houses for first meetings.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH BREEDING.

The Pygmy goat suffers from very few problems and lists such as this seldom manage to cover the precise need of the reader. An experienced Pygmy goat breeder, or your Vet, will probably be required but the following may provide an initial guide:

Female not getting in-kid.

Is the male proven?
ARE YOU GETTING THE TIMING RIGHT FOR MATING?
(see page 33) and if possible leave female with male for three weeks.
Is she too fat or (much less likely) badly under-nourished?
Did she have complications last time? Seek Veterinary advice.

Problems during pregnancy.

If feeding is correct and no 'accidents' occur these are virtually non-existent.
If an abortion does occur seek veterinary advice.

Problems associated with kidding.

These are mainly caused by mal-presentations which may range from a minor problem which slows down the kidding (but the kid/s eventually arrive without or with limited assistance) to rather badly 'tangled' kids where a Caesarian section is required. Dead kid/s may also cause problems.

It should be mentioned at this point that MOST kids arrive unaided and a reasonable percentage of them have obviously never read the text-book. Successful 'unorthodox' presentations often occur.

Owners should begin by noting TIMES. After about 1½ hours of hard, regular straining it is time to think about calling the Vet for advice. The condition of the female should be considered, she is not in these circumstances going to look too happy, but an earlier call is indicated if she begins to look very distressed and ill, if she >

looks bright and strong it might be acceptable to wait a little longer. A good knowledge of the goat's normal 'character' is invaluable at times like this. Some are out-going extroverts, others worry dreadfully over everything and their attitude reflects this.

Owners must maintain a cheerful, calm and positive attitude. Pygmies do seem to have telepathic abilities sometimes.

If Veterinary assistance is required do not delay, or, in the case of night-time kiddings, 'wait until morning' your Vet will probably appreciate the opportunity to deliver live kid/s.

As the breeder gains experience some limited investigation prior to contacting the Vet. may become feasible. Fingernails must be cut very short and the hands scrubbed clean. An obstetric gel should be applied to the hand before inserting two or three fingers into the vagina to try and identify what, if anything, is being presented. It may be imagined, from looking at diagrams in books, that there would be no difficulty at all in deciding what position the kid had adopted to slow things down. Such ideas will be swiftly dashed - it is NOT EASY to identify bits of an unseen kid covered in mucous, but it can sometimes help a breeder to determine whether things are progressing slowly and correctly, or whether Veterinary help will be required. Most hands do not go easily into a Pygmy goat, some minor 'corrections' can be carried out with fingers only. ANYTHING MORE IS A JOB FOR THE VET.

Occasionally a Caesarian section may be considered necessary. Owners should not despair, Pygmies do recover well from this major surgery and in some cases may be far less inconvenienced than by heavy and prolonged attempts at correction which may prove unsuccessful. This is, of course, a decision for the Vet. to make.

continued.>

Retained Afterbirth.

Contact Vet. for advice if not dropped within 12 hours. Do NOT try to pull it away.

Weak kids.

Pygmy kids are usually strong, lusty babes up on their feet within minutes of the birth and staggering around looking for their first feed. After a prolonged birth kids may be reluctant to 'get going'. Tickling the nostril with a strand of straw often provokes a response. Very gently swinging kids may help. Stand with legs astride, grasp kid firmly by back legs and swing between your legs. Kids which were not dried off immediately after birth may become chilled and this can prove fatal. Rub briskly with a warm towel to stimulate and provide some source of gentle heat (a hot-water bottle wrapped in a towel). As soon as the kid can hold its head up, milk a few ml. of colostrum* straight into a clean plastic syringe and give the kid a little. Do not under estimate the power of the mother's voice for rousing the kid. As soon as kids look stronger get them back to their mother but pay careful attention until they are on their feet and feeding properly. Give more colostrum from the syringe, if necessary, until this stage is reached.

Normal kids who do not obtain a feed of milk within three or four hours of birth.

Occasionally a normal, lively kid will give up looking for the teats. Giving the first feed of colostrum* from a syringe will ensure that he/she has had something. Positioning the kid at the teat and squirting a little colostrum onto the nose (easier said than done) may work. Tickling the tail of the kid will encourage it to suck as does lightly touching its forehead with your fingers. It is important to make sure that kids DO feed within a reasonable time or they will become too weak to do so.
*If COLOSTRUM is available do make sure that it is this which the kid receives FIRST. Its valuable qualities are cancelled if preceded by anything else.

4. REARING KIDS.

If kids are left with their mothers the responsibilities of the owner are not unduly onerous. The female will provide milk for the kid/s on a mutually beneficial basis; she will provide schooling in what else is good to eat (hay, concentrates etc. and 'Yes, really son, you can eat this funny green stuff, it's called grass!), and the kids will fit into the herd and learn the routines. It requires a very good reason indeed to disrupt this very satisfactory arrangement and only those who are interested in milking seriously generally bother.

It is sometimes thought that kids which are reared naturally become 'wild' and unresponsive to humans. If the owner establishes contact by picking them up, cuddling and talking to them, on a regular basis, the fact that milk is being provided by the mother will have no effect on the relationship at all. It is regular contact, not necessarily bottle-feeding, which establishes the bond.

Ages for disbudding (if required) and castration are given on **page 39.**

Kids should be included in the worming programme when they reach four weeks old (not before), and hoof trimming should also commence at this age. Be very gentle and exercise extreme care when beginning hoof trimming as foundations are being laid which may affect the animal's attitude to this routine task for the rest of its life.

All kids should be vaccinated against entero-toxaemia at approx. 10 weeks old, with the second vaccination 4 weeks later.

Kids may be weaned at 12 - 14 weeks and if sold at this age will need no further milk. Kids who stay with their mothers may take milk for at least seven months and in some cases longer.

KIDS FOR SALE.

Most breeders will, at some stage, be faced with the ordeal of selling their kids.

The following points should be noted:

+ Most people who buy Pygmy goats for the first time know very little, or nothing, about them. It is up to the breeder to ensure that sufficient information is provided to enable the purchasers to look after the animals properly. (Suggest they buy THIS BOOKLET.)

+ If breeders suspect that homes will not be suitable they must REFUSE TO SELL.

+ Never, ever, give goats away 'to a good home'.

+ Do not sell kids under the minimum weaning age unless the purchaser is an experienced goat-keeper with goats' milk available. Even this involves risks and should be avoided if at all possible.

+ Do not sell single kids, find another breeder with kids for sale and obtain a companion.

+ Do not sell entire male kids to unsuitable homes.

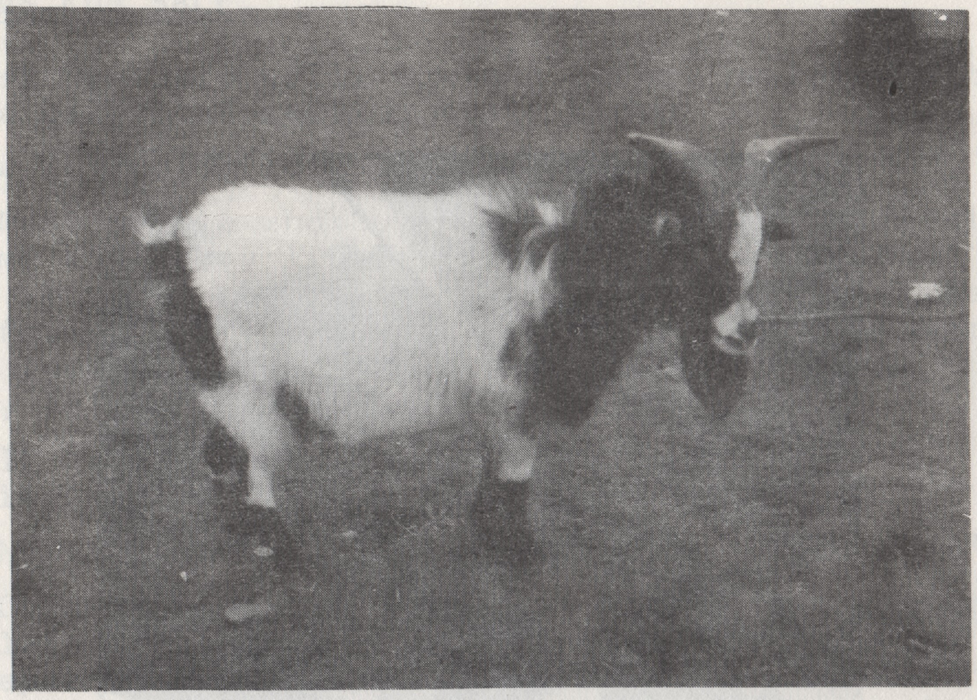
+ Do not sell Pygmy goats at markets or auctions. They will probably be bought for slaughter or by an 'impulse' buyer who has not the slightest idea how to look after them.

+ Where Pygmy goats are concerned, customers hardly ever know best. Do not be 'bullied' by would-be purchasers into some act which you know is not in the best interests of the goats, just to get a sale.

+ Be prepared to offer an 'after sale' service of advice and help with queries which might occur and make sure your purchasers know you are willing to do this.

Can they be milked ???

see page 48



Pygmy Stud Males.

TO KEEP A STUD MALE ... OR NOT ?

The idea of keeping a stud male often occurs during some particularly inconvenient journey, complete with in-season female, to a stud male residing several counties away. If the number of females has increased to 4 or 5, and if suitable accommodation is available, it may be timely to consider keeping your own male.

Before making the final decision study the following points - if you use someone else's male there are certain benefits which tend to be overlooked.

+ You do not have to house, feed and care for him throughout the year. Entire males do need more care than females to keep them looking good.
+ You can, if required, choose a different male for each female.
+ If kids from a particular mating are not as pleasing as you had hoped a different male can be chosen next time.
+ If you decide not to breed one year you will only have to contend with the calls of in-season females, not the howls and other sounds of torment from your frustrated male as well.

It is without doubt more convenient in some respects to have a male on the premises. If you allow him to stand at stud do not expect current stud fees to cover the cost of keeping him. If you intend to board visitors be prepared for the expense of extra repairs to fencing and, however careful you try to be, extra Vet's bills as your own goats are exposed to a wider range of problems.

If you do decide to buy, or keep a male kid you have bred, CHOOSE HIM WITH THE UTMOST CARE. The male is 'half the herd' and, as such, its most important member. Such animals are not cheap to buy and are definitely NOT the kind which are 'rescued because he needed a good home'.

MANAGEMENT OF THE STUD MALE.

The Pygmy goat is a precocious breeder and male kids should not be reared with female kids. Separation at 10 weeks is recommended but males may stay with their mothers for a little longer.

Stud males MUST NOT be allowed to run with in-kid females. Immediately before kidding and for several days after he will behave as if she is in season. This is dangerous for unborn kids and worrying for the female.

The most satisfactory way of keeping the stud male is to give him his own house, his own paddock from where he can see his females, and to take the in-season females to the male when mating is required. Males accept this arrangement and are happy with it and owners can plan kidding dates to suit themselves.

Another option is to allow the male to run with the females for a few weeks. This method usually results in all the females kidding within a very short space of time which can prove arduous for the owner. Females which are too young and those not intended for breeding MUST BE accommodated in a separate area away from the male.

If the male is allowed to run with the females throughout the year no control can be exercised over kidding dates and twice-yearly breeding is a very real possibility with females being mated again a few weeks after kidding, and under-age kiddings probable as female kids are mated. This cannot be considered a responsible breeding programme and should be avoided.

ODOUR. The male odour is produced by scent glands which are active during the main breeding season and is reinforced by the habit of spraying legs, chest and face. The latter can be improved by washing and DESCENTING (removal of scent glands on the head) will substantially reduce the odour from that source. The procedure takes place when the male is disbudded and causes no problems. It may also be possible to treat horned goats.

TEMPERAMENT OF THE STUD MALE.

The Pygmy male may be small in stature but he is impressive both in his intensely masculine looks and his strength. He will not, understandably, welcome the introduction of a rival male into his domain.

Unfortunately it is sometimes assumed, because of the above qualities, that this is an animal of dubious temperament. Nothing could be further from the truth but animals can, in most circumstances, be persuaded to live up to their owner's expectations. If owners believe their males should be rough, tough and hard to handle the goats will do their best to oblige. This creates a vicious circle as visitors see these males and think that is how all males should be expected to behave.

The Pygmy male is a kindly, gentle animal who is benevolent towards young kids, females and owners.

As with other Pygmies, he should never be encouraged to butt by playing rough games with him and children should not be permitted to torment him. Young kids who butt 'in fun' should always be told sharply 'No', never retaliate with a smack - this gives the kid entirely the wrong idea! A displeased voice is the owner's most powerful weapon and is all that is needed to correct undesirable behaviour if training is started when kids are very young. There is no reason why handling the entire male should not be as easy as handling the females, if one discounts the problem of odour!

There may be some indication that 'temperament' runs in families. When choosing a male close attention is paid to conformation and pedigree, as most Pygmies are kept as 'pets' it may prove beneficial to consider temperament too when choosing a stud male. There are no benefits to be had from keeping hard-to-handle males.

part three:

MILKING

The Pygmy goat is NOT a suitable choice for people who are buying goats simply to obtain MILK. The tiny Pygmy cannot compete with her larger 'sisters' in giving a gallon a day and the idea of trying to 'improve' the breed in this respect should be strongly resisted.

What the Pygmy CAN DO, and does very well indeed, is to supply a pint or two of top-grade milk to those owners who keep goats because they enjoy their company and who also want the added bonus which milking provides.

There are, in fact, a number of very real benefits in keeping goats which do not overwhelm their owners with the quantities of milk they produce, particularly when there is no inclination to get involved in full 'dairying' activities of cheese and butter making. Although, having said that, some Pygmy goat owners do make yoghurt and soft cheeses with great success.

'Serious' milking could produce surprisingly high yields (4lbs per day average over 5½ months has been recorded in the U.S.), but most Pygmy goat owners do not want to cull, or bottle-feed, kids.

The Pygmy goat will adapt to several alternative methods of milking but it is, of course, necessary TO MILK REGULARLY ONCE A PLAN HAS BEEN DECIDED UPON.

It would be reasonable to expect an AVERAGE yield of 1 to 1½ pints per day over a 7 to 9 month lactation, with higher yields in the first half falling off to around a ½ pint per day in the last month or two. Individual goats will vary widely. At least one Pygmy goat has 'milked through' giving her owner a steady ½ pint daily throughout the lactation but this should be considered unusual.

The most common milking plans in use for Pygmies are: a) start to milk when kids leave home at 14 weeks - females with single kids should be checked occasionally as some kids feed from one side only leaving the other to dry up unless the owner intervenes. When milking starts a better yield will be obtained from a twice-a-day routine; OR b) separate the kids from the mother at night, milk once-daily in the morning and allow the kids to run with their mother during the day. It is essential to have secure, separate accommodation for plan b) as there is considerable initial resistance to the idea of separation and kids will get back to their mothers if they can. If intending to milk several females with kids of about the same age the kids can share a pen or house at night. When they become accustomed to the idea they enjoy playing together.

Most females also exhibit a considerable initial resistance - to being milked. Owners may, at this stage, come to the conclusion that Pygmy goats are not milkers and were never meant to be milked! Dare one add at this point that quite a lot of 'dairy' goats do not co-operate perfectly when THEY are first milked. If Pygmy owners keep calm, persevere and endeavour NOT to lose their tempers it will be discovered that Pygmy goats can be milked and will even, after a short while, not only enjoy but actually demand it!

As the Pygmy is so small it is not easy to get down low enough to milk and a milking stand will prove useful. If positioned against a wall it will be easier to exert the extra control needed initially. Choose a milking area which is as clean and dust-free as possible.

For the first few days after kidding colostrum is produced so most people would not start to milk until four or five days after kidding at the earliest.(It is excellent 'insurance' against future problems to have a few ounces of colostrum in the freezer - milk just an ounce or so from newly-kidded females into a clean container, cool quickly and freeze.)

If at all possible milking should start as a two-person exercise, with one to hold the goat still and the other to milk. After a week or so most Pygmies will voluntarily position themselves for milking and will stand still, eating their concentrates, with a minimum of restraint. Feeding concentrates from the very start may distract your goat from your first attempts at milking but more often they get spilled. It may be preferable to reach a state of some calm before the concentrates are fed at the time of milking.

Pygmy teats are usually just about large enough to milk with two fingers and a thumb. The principles involved when extracting milk are simple. The milk in the teat must be 'trapped' there by gentle pressure at the top end of the teat (where it joins the udder), the trapped milk may then be squeezed out. If the milk in the teat is not properly isolated it will be pushed back into the udder instead of into your waiting container. This is very bad for the udder. Many people who have Pygmies do not have previous experience of milking, but even those who do will find it necessary to make adjustments to suit the Pygmy's size. Gentleness is essential, and speed will come with experience. Both hands are usually used when milking but milking with one hand and holding the container with the other is acceptable and offers the distinct advantage of having a 'mobile' container to collect the milk in. When all the milk has been removed gently massage the udder from top to bottom. This will release the last few squirts and is called 'stripping'. It is not essential if females are going back to their >

kids after milking, but females who do not have kids to 'finish the job' for you will start to reduce their yield if they are not milked out properly.

Most Pygmy goat owners will only have enough milk for their own use and will not be selling any but never-the-less every attempt should be made to produce 'clean' milk; to strain and cool it properly and to keep the containers in which it is stored untainted. Pygmy goats do not appear to pass on taints caused by feeding the wrong thing at the wrong time and the milk is free of 'off' tastes so any complaints received could almost certainly be blamed on faulty handling AFTER the milk left the goat.

Unless an udder looks dirty (review your general management immediately) pre-milking udder washing may not be essential. The first squirt of milk from each side can be milked into a separate container if required to minimise the possibility of contamination by bacteria which have worked their way into the teat but Pygmy goats normally have very tight, small holes in their teats and this may not be a problem. Always milk into a very clean container (stainless steel or enamel is easier to clean and therefore better than plastic but the latter can be useful when starting to milk - it bounces more quietly!). Cool the milk immediately. As the quantity of milk will not usually be large it is quite acceptable to cool it by standing the container in a bowl of very cold water. Strain the milk (however careful you are the odd hair will find its way in) using either 'proper' milk filters or a sheet of kitchen paper sandwiched between two fine nylon or metal sieves. And put it in the refrigerator. Milk for freezing can be strained straight into a strong plastic bag, sealed and placed in the freezer. Goats' milk freezes well and does not separate when thawed if frozen soon after it leaves the goat.

cont.>

Keep all containers and utensils which are used for milk production separate from other kitchen equipment. After use rinse first in warm water and then scrub in very hot water. There are several dairy 'sterilising' products which it may be considered worth investing in, or equipment may be sterilised with boiling water. After washing leave to dry in an airy place.

If owners are milking several Pygmy goats it is quite possible to collect enough milk to get into other, more advanced, dairying activities. There are books devoted to cheese making etc. and these are recommended to those who are interested in such things.

The Pygmy goat's lactation is shorter than 'dairy' breeds but it is not difficult to arrange early and late matings so that, with two or three Pygmies, there is a good, year-long supply. Other owners may enjoy the break from milking during the winter months and 'make do' with milk from the freezer at this time.

A surprisingly large percentage of the population truly believe that goats' milk tastes peculiar. The Pygmy goat produces pure-white milk which tastes of nothing but pleasantness. If it is given to visitors, without comment, they will be unlikely to notice anything out of the ordinary unless it is that the milk is unusually 'nice'.

Let's keep it that way.

Pygmy goats do not seem to suffer from many 'problems' associated with milk production and the most probable reason for this is that they are producing within their 'natural' capacity.

Let us also keep it that way.

People interested in higher yields and greater quantities of milk should choose one of the 'dairy' breeds.

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**Reproduced from Pygmy Goat 'NOTES'.*

This booklet is issued by the

PYGMY GOAT CLUB

The P.G.C. was formed in 1982 to protect the interests, and improve the status, of Pygmy goats in Great Britain.

A major objective of the club is to try to ensure that ALL Pygmy goats find themselves in knowledgeable, permanent homes and this booklet should be studied by all prospective owners BEFORE deciding whether, or not, to take on the responsibilities of Pygmy goat ownership.

It is not possible to provide complete information about Pygmy goats. Anyone who claims to know <u>everything</u> about goats is being deluded - all goats like to surprise their owners occasionally, it is part of their charm. However, there are certain guidelines which it is essential to follow and these have been covered.

Membership of the Pygmy Goat Club is open to everyone who supports the aims of the club. An application form will be found inside and we look forward to welcoming you as a member.

£1.25